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ABSTRACT

This packet is a career development teaching guide on decision-making developed for high school teachers. A brief introduction to skillful decision-making is followed by five lessons on decision-making. Each lesson includes one or more of the following: goal, behavioral objectives, teaching activities, and teaching procedures (includes content and learning activities). The lessons are (1) Three Steps to Take in Making a Decision, (2) What Are Values: How Do They Affect the Decisions I Make?, (3) The Four Categories of Information Used in Decision Making, (4) The Conditions under Which Decisions Are Made, and (5) Four Strategies Used in Decision Making. A career information lesson on using the occupational outlook handbook concludes this booklet and includes a goal, a behavior objective, and group guidance teaching activities. A form for students to evaluate the packet is attached. (EM)

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Group Guidance Packet

Area: Decision Making

CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
230 East Ninth Street
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How Can I Make the Best Decision?

Introduction

Life is a series of decisions. Each decision made has immediate and long range consequences.

Decision making is a process in which a person selects from two or more possible choices. This process requires skills that can be learned, applied and evaluated.

When decision making is skillfully used, it is more likely that the outcome will be satisfying. A skillful decision maker has more personal freedom in his/her life because he/she is more likely to recognize a greater variety of choices.

Three major requirements of skillful decision making are:

1. Examination and recognition of personal values.
2. Knowledge and use of adequate, relevant information.
3. Knowledge and use of an effective strategy for changing values and information into action.

The following activities deal with these three areas and provide an introduction to the decision making process.

The Decision Making Packets were developed in the Spring of 1977 by:

Brack Strong
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Teacher's Guide

HOW CAN I MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

Lesson #1: Three Steps to Take in Making a Decision

Area of Development: Decision Making

Goal: The student will understand that a rational decision making process can be applied in making decisions.

Objectives: The student will be able to identify the three steps of decision making. Given appropriate time, the student will demonstrate the use of these steps by personal application to a given example.

Activity:

1. Open discussion with class as a whole:
   a. to define terms used.
   b. to deal with factors which influence decisions.
2. Divide the class into groups of four to six in order to study and discuss an example of the decision making process.
3. Do an evaluation of the class activity.

Procedure:

1. Have an open classroom discussion of the meaning of the term "decision".
   a. Offer a summary by defining the term decision as, "A process in which a person selects from two or more possible choices."
2. Continue the classroom discussion around the questions:
   a. "What common values or factors influence the decisions we make?"

      Some values are:

      desire to experience pleasure
      desire to feel happy
      approval and acceptance by others
      need for health and safety
      desire to avoid pain or discombort
      desire to have material things
      desire to experience success
      moral values

   b. "How important is the factor of information to decision making?"

c. Explain briefly the four categories of information:

(1) Possible courses of action.
(2) Possible outcomes (result of various actions)
(3) Probability of outcomes (relationship between action and outcomes)
(4) Desirability of outcomes (personal preferences)

3. A strategy is a plan for making a decision on the basis of values, information and risks. Define and discuss briefly the four common strategies for decision making:

a. The Wish Strategy: A person chooses what he/she wishes would happen regardless of risk, cost or probability.

b. The Safe Strategy: The person selects the course of action that has the highest probability of success.

c. The Escape Strategy: The person selects the course of action that is most likely to avoid the worst possible results.

d. The Combination Strategy: The person selects the course of action that has both high probability and high desirability.

4. Divide the class into groups of four to six. Give each group a copy of the following example of decision making:

Step 1. Read the following example and express your thoughts and feelings about the questions which follow:

You are a member of a ball team. Next Saturday is the final game of the season and will definitely determine whether or not your team will win the championship. The winning team will get individual trophies and will have a banquet in their honor. However, your best friend has invited you to go on a dream trip over the weekend. You must decide what you will do.

Step 2. Consider each of the "three steps in decision making" listed below and discuss your feelings about them.

What <u>values</u> are involved for you?

What additional <u>information</u> do you need in order to make your decision?

Which of the four commonly used <u>strategies</u> will you use?

5. Discuss with the class as a whole:

   a. What values were mentioned (in each group)?

   b. What additional information was needed (in each group)?

   c. What strategies were used (in each group)?

6. Have each student do an evaluation using the evaluation form attached at the end of the packet.

Teacher's Guide

HOW CAN I MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

Lesson #2: What are Values? How do They Affect the Decisions I Make?

Area of Development: Decision Making

Goal: The student will understand what values are and how they affect his/her decisions.

Objective: Given appropriate time, the student will be able to do an initial task of identifying and classifying his/her values.

Activity:

1. With the class as a whole:

   a. Review the definition of "decision". ("A process in which a person selects from two or more possible choices.")

   b. Review the three steps in making a decision and briefly define each.

      Values - "The worth or importance of something to you."

      Information - (Four categories or kinds)

      (1) Possible courses of action
      (2) Possible outcomes or results (of these actions)
      (3) Probable outcomes or results (of specific actions)
      (4) Desirable outcomes (personal preference)

      Strategies - "A plan for making a decision on the basis of values, information and risks."

      (1) The Wish Strategy: You choose what you wish would happen regardless of risk, cost or probability.

      (2) The Safe Strategy: You select a course of action that has the highest probability of success.

      (3) The Escape Strategy: You select the course of action that is most likely to avoid the worst possible results.

      (4) The Combination Strategy: You select the course of action that has both high probability and high desirability.

   c. Give instructions for small group activity:

      (1) Provide a copy of the chart for each participant (or have students copy from chalkboard), and give the following instructions:

(a) Under "20 Things I Like To Do" list these as they come to mind.

(b) Place an X under the heading and in the column where you feel each of the twenty should be. You may check more than one column if your "like" applies to more than one.

20 Things I Like To Do	Desire for pleasure	Desire to feel happy	Approval and acceptance by others	Desire to have money	Moral value and conscience	Desire to experience success	Desire to avoid pain or discomfort	Desire for health and safety	Love & respect for family	Education	Independence	Responsibility	Done alone	Done with others
1.														
2.														
3.														
4.														
5.														
6.														
7.														
8.														
9.														
10.														
11.														
12.														
13.														
14.														
15.														
16.														
17.														
18.														
19.														
20.														

2. Allow sufficient time for participants to complete the chart. Divide the students into groups of four to six and have them discuss their activity.

3. With the group as a whole, ask for volunteers to share their experience doing this activity. Are there any patterns or interesting observations?

4. Have students do an evaluation of the activity using the evaluation form at the back of the packet.

Teacher's Guide

HOW CAN I MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

Lesson #3: The Four Categories of Information Used in Decision Making

Area of Development: Decision Making

Goal: The student will understand that the kind of information one has regarding a decision influences the decision.

Objective: Given appropriate time, the student will be able to identify and classify the four categories of information when given an example.

Activity:

1. With the class (group) together as a whole:

   a. Review the meaning of the term "decision": "A process in which a person selects from two or more possible choices."

   b. Review the three steps in making a decision: 1) values; 2) information; 3) strategies. (Brief description of each).

   c. Discuss the four categories of information used in making a decision:

      (1) <u>Possible courses of Action</u>

         (a) If new courses of action can be discovered, this will increase freedom of choice.

         (b) Lack of information on possible courses of action limits the choice. There may be other good courses of action, but if they are unknown, they cannot be considered.

      (2) <u>Possible Outcomes</u> (results of various courses of action)

         (a) If I decide a particular way, what will be the result? Each course of action has a unique outcome or consequence.

      (3) <u>Probability of Outcomes</u> (relationship between actions and outcomes

         (a) Which outcome is MOST LIKELY to result from each course of action?

      (4) <u>Desirability of Outcomes</u> (personal preferences)

         (a) What do I WANT MOST to result from my course of action?

d. Give the students a copy of the example and the following instructions (to be used after they are divided into small groups):

1. Read the example and discuss it.

2. One person in the small group will serve as a recorder-reporter and will record and report (later) the thoughts and feelings of the group regarding the following example and questions which follow:

EXAMPLE:

You come into your classroom and see a small change purse lying on the floor. You pick it up and open it. Inside there is a note which reads, "Please stop by the drug store for the following items after school today". There are several items listed. Inside the note there is a $10 bill.

You must decide what to do with the purse, note and money.

a. What are the possible courses of action that could be taken?

b. What are the possible outcomes of these actions?

c. What are the probable outcomes?

d. What are the desired outcomes?

e. Divide the large group (class) into small groups of four to six.

f. Give them adequate time to discuss the example and to respond to the four kinds of information.

g. Bring the group together as a whole and get some feedback regarding the four kinds of information.

h. Have the students do an evaluation of the activities.

Teacher's Guide

HOW CAN I MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

Lesson #4: The Conditions Under Which Decisions Are Made

Area of Development: Decision Making

Goal: The student will understand that how one feels about possible results of decisions will influence the decision made.

Objective: The student will be able to identify the four conditions under which decisions are made. Given appropriate time, the student will demonstrate the use of these conditions by analyzing a given example.

Activity:

1. Define and discuss terms used in decision making.
2. Review the three steps of decision making.
3. State, define and discuss the four terms used to describe the conditions under which decisions are made.
4. Give instructions for small group activity.
5. Divide the class (group) into small groups of four to six.
   a. Small group discussions of example given.
   b. Each group will attempt to match the classifications of conditions to persons in the example.
6. Bring the group together to:
   a. Share thoughts, question and feelings about the activity.
   b. Evaluate the activity.

Procedure:

1. Discuss (review) the meaning of the term "decision". ("A process in which a person selects from two or more choices.")
2. Review and define the "three steps of decision making.:
   a. Values: The worth or importance something has for a person.
   b. Information: Information in decision making falls into four categories:

(1) Possible courses of action
(2) Possible outcomes
(3) Probable outcomes
(4) Desirable outcomes

c. Strategies: A plan for making a decision on the basis of values, information and risks.

3. "Few decisions are made under conditions of certainty and most are probably made with a combination of risk and uncertainty."

(Introduce, define and discuss the four possible conditions under which decisions are made.)

a. Certainty: Each choice leads to one outcome known for certain.

b. Risk: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with known probabilities.

c. Uncertainty: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with unknown probabilities.

d. Combination: Combination of risk and uncertainty.

NOTE: "Choosing and using a strategy is an individualized art that can be learned."

4. Divide the class (group) into groups of four to six. (Give each student the following information on printed sheets or chalkboard:)

Read the four examples below. After each example, fill in the blank with one of the four conditions: 1) Certainty; 2) Risk; 3) Uncertainty; 4) Combination.

EX. 1: You decide to apply for a very selective training program. You don't know if you will be accepted, but you can use grades, test scores and percent of applicants usually accepted to guess at your chances of being accepted. Strategy Used:_____

Ex. 2: You must decide between trying out for the volleyball team and the basketball team. You have never been on either and both will be tough competition. Strategy Used:_____

Ex. 3: You decide to flip a coin to make a choice.
Strategy Used:_____

Ex. 4: You decide to jump into a swimming pool. What are the chances of your getting wet? Strategy Used:_____

5. Bring the small groups back to one large group.

   a. Discuss feelings, responses, comments and questions about the four conditions under which decisions are made.

   b. Complete the evaluation form (at the back of this packet) for this activity.

Teacher's Guide

HOW CAN I MAKE THE BEST DECISION?

Lesson #5: Four Strategies Used in Decision Making

Area of Development: Decision Making

Goal: The student will understand that there are a variety of strategies for making decisions and that decision making is an art which can be learned.

Objective: Given an appropriate time and an example of need for a decision making, the student will identify and apply the four strategies of decision making.

Activity:

1. Review of terms used in decision making.
2. Introduction of lesson.
3. Small group activity working on example.
4. Discussion
5. Evaluation

Procedure:

1. Review of terms used in decision making (encourage students to define and answer.)

   a. Decision ("A process in which a person selects from two or more choices.")

   b. Value ("The worth or importance of something to you.")

   c. What are some common values?

      (1) Desire to experience pleasure
      (2) Desire to feel happy
      (3) Approval and acceptance by others
      (4) Health and safety
      (5) Desire to avoid pain or discomfort
      (6) Desire to have material things
      (7) Desire to experience success
      (8) Moral values

   d. What are the four categories of information?

      (1) Possible courses of action
      (2) Possible outcomes (results of various actions)
      (3) Probability of outcomes (relationship between action and outcomes)
      (4) Desirability of outcomes (personal preferences)

e. What are the four common strategies for decision making?

(1) The Wish Strategy: "Choose what you desire most"

(2) The Safe Strategy: "Choose the most likely to succeed."

(3) The Escape Strategy: "Choose so as to avoid the worst."

(4) The Combination Strategy: "Choose both the most likely and most desirable."

f. What are the four conditions under which decisions are made?

(1) Certainty: Each choice leads to one outcome known to be certain.

(2) Risk: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with known probabilities.

(3) Uncertainty: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with unknown probabilities.

(4) Combination: Combination of risk and uncertainty.

2. Introduce lesson five: "Four Strategies Used in Decision Making."

Introduction of "Four Strategies Used in Decision Making"

The final phase of the decision making process requires a thorough consideration of the risks associated with each possible course of action. This step puts together your personal values and the information you have gathered. Most decisions involve some risk in terms of possible outcomes.

Few decisions are made under conditions of certainty, and most are probably made with a combination of risk and uncertainty. The conditions under which all decisions are made can be divided into four classifications:

1. Certainty: Each choice leads to one outcome known to be certain.

2. Risk: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with known probabilities.

3. Uncertainty: Each choice leads to several possible outcomes with unknown probabilities.

4. Combination: Combination of risk and uncertainty.

A strategy is a plan for making a decision on the basis of values, objectives, information and risks. Without a strategy, the decision maker merely guesses.

Choosing and using a strategy is an individualized art that can be learned. Some people use certain strategies consistently and others use a different strategy for each decision made. Several commonly used strategies are:

1. The Wish Strategy: "Choose what you desire most." A person chooses what they wish would happen. A course of action is selected that could lead to the most desirable result, regardless of risk, cost or probability.

2. The Safe Strategy: "Choose the most likely to succeed." A person selects the course of action that has the highest probability of being successful.

3. The Escape Strategy: "Choose to avoid the worst." A person selects the course of action that is most likely to avoid the worst possible result.

4. The Combination Strategy: "Choose both the most likely and most desirable." This is a combination of the wish and safe strategies.

Learning about strategies is a summary and review of earlier units in decision making. It is the final step in the decision making process.

Effective decision making requires that the decision maker be willing to accept the responsibility for the result of his/her decision. When a person exercises power, control and freedom, he must be responsible for what happens.

1. Divide the group (class) into small groups of four to six. Give them the following instructions:

   a. Read the following story. Decide which of the decision making strategies were used by each of the persons.

Arnold, Bill, Carl and Dave went to the race track to bet on the horses Each of them made their own choice regarding which horse to bet on. Arnold bet his money on a horse named "Never Win"; the odds were 100-1. Bill bet on "Can't Lose"; the odds were 2-1. Carl was low on money and knew if he bet and didn't win, he wouldn't have gas money to get home. He decided not to bet at all. Dave bet his money on a horse named "Easy Money Sometimes", the odds were 10-1

	COMBINATION SAFE + WISH	ESCAPE	SAFE	WISH
Arnold				
Bill				
Carl				
Dave				

b. Discuss your answers within the group.

4. Discuss the four strategies with the group as a unit.

5. Do an evaluation of this activity using the form for evaluation in the back of this packet.

Teacher's Guide

Finding and Using Career Information

Lesson: Using the Occupational Outlook Handbook

Area of Development: Decision Making/World of Work

Goal: The student will be able to use the Occupational Outlook Handbook to study any of the 850 occupations desired.

Objective: Given appropriate time, the student will demonstrate the skill to use the Occupational Outlook Handbook by taking a specific occupation and summarizing information regarding:

1. place of employment
2. training required
3. employment outlook
4. earnings to expect
5. additional source of information

Activity:

1. Read introduction
2. Locate Index to Occupations
3. Identify Five Areas of Emphasis
4. Do individual study
5. Discuss activity
6. Evaluate activity

Lesson: Using the Occupational Outlook Handbook

Group Guidance Activity

Introduction:

Work can be one of life's most rewarding experiences. A job can offer pride in achievement and an opportunity for individual growth, as well as the security of an adequate income. But, satisfying employment is seldom achieved without informed career planning.

Up to date and accurate occupational information contained in the Occupational Outlook Handbook provides a major resource.

Within the next ten years, employment in the United States will likely increase by as much as 20 million jobs. Accompanying this increase, a significant shift from goods-producing industries (agriculture, mining, construction and manufacturing) toward service-producing industries (transportation and utilities, trade, finance, services and government) is expected. This expected shift is especially significant for educational and vocational planning.

Today, young Americans must be aware of the effect sweeping changes in our society will have on their career futures. The Occupational Outlook Handbook is a key tool for helping young people make sensible career decisions.

Because changing demands cause shifts in skill and training requirements for occupations, students should begin the process of career exploration early in their lives. By acquiring a broad knowledge of occupations, each student can become aware of many career opportunities and be prepared to make suitable choices according to abilities and goals.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook answers such questions as: what does a person actually do on the job; what abilities and interests does the job call for; what kind of schooling and other training is required for the job; what are the working conditions; and what will the job opportunities be in coming years?

Lesson: Using the Occupational Outlook Handbook

Step 1: Write the title of the occupation to be studied

_____

Step 2. Turn to the "Index of Occupations and Industries" in the Occupational Outlook Handbook (pages 803-825 in some editions). It will be near the back. Occupations are listed alphabetically. Find the occupational title you are looking for and write down the page number.

_____

Step 3. Write a brief summary of each sub-heading under the main heading

a. What is the nature of the work for the title you chose?

b. Where are the places of employment?

c. What training is required?

d. What earnings could you expect?

e. What is the employment outlook?

f. List at least one additional source of information.

Allow sufficient time for students to complete their study individually. Then:

1. Discuss the various areas of Step 3.

2. Evaluate the activity using the form in the back of the Decision making packet.

EVALUATION FORM

DATE:_____

Please circle the number for each of the following statements which best describes your feelings about today's activity.

	NO				YES
1. This activity was of real interest to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The activity was helpful to me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This activity involves something important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I like the way the activity was organized.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The leader (teacher) seemed interested in the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I would like more activities like this.	1	2	3	4	5

The most interesting part of the activity was:

I would like more information about:

NAME:(Optional)_____